

December 2002

Marine with AFRL ties recovers after close call

by *Grace Janiszewski, Sensors Directorate*

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — Bob Simpson, Air Force Research Laboratory engineer, and his family had a special Thanksgiving this year because their son is alive and well, and returned home to live with them earlier this month.

Marine Lance Cpls. George Simpson, son of Bob Simpson, and Antonio Sledd were shot by two gunmen in Kuwait during an annual exercise Oct. 8. The gunmen opened fire around midday on 150 Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit who were conducting no-live fire urban assault training on Failaka Island.

Simpson will have permanent damage to his arm, but he is on the path to recovery. The Marine Corps is allowing him to relocate to Wright-Patterson during his convalescence. His recovery will take a minimum of six months, and could be longer depending on how the bones in his forearm heal.

Troops rushed to aid the injured men following the attack; Navy Seaman J. Koleosho assisted in Simpson's care. According to Simpson, Koleosho is responsible for saving his life by swiftly applying a tourniquet.

Sledd, of Hillsborough, Fla., died en route to the medical facility.

According to Bob Simpson, before his son's incident, and especially since Sept. 11, 2001, the family realized that serving in the military today isn't an easy path. "You can be a target simply because you're an American."

Gen. James L. Jones, commandant of the Marine Corps, presented Simpson with his Purple Heart Medal Oct. 19.

"He is very patriotic and understands many people have died to secure and protect our freedom," said his father. "For him, it was just an absolute necessity to serve his country."

Simpson joined the Marine Corps in July 1999. Following basic training, he was stationed in Naples, Italy, as a security forces troop.

Military service is nothing new to the Simpson family. Bob, an Air Force ROTC graduate from the University of Kentucky, served on active duty for eight years before joining the Air Force Research Laboratory Sensors Directorate as a civilian in 1989. @